Under the Chestnuts.

We stood beneath the chestnuts, beside the river bank;
So still the swallows swooped and poised, and from the streamlet drank;
The sun beyond the purple moors was setting in the west,
With the clouds like vassals round him in gold and crimson drest.
You said the words that made life full of hope and joy to me,
And at our feet Ure shone and gleamed, onrushing to the sea.

I stood beneath the chestnuts, beside the river bank,
And from the robin's vesper songs, as if it hurt me, shrank;
The sun beyond the purple moors was setting in the west:
I thought, so set my happiness, with all that life loves best.
And no one whispered "Be of cheer," no hand held help to me,
And at my feet Ure shone and gleamed, onrushing to the sea.

Ah! still beneath the chestnuts, beside the river bank,
Will other glad young lovers the golden evening thank;
The sun beyond the purple moors sinks glorious to his rest,
And hears the pleading promise made, the trusting love confessed;
And other maidens meet the fate that wrecked my life and me,
While all the while Ure shines and gleams, and rushes to the sea.

—All the Year Round.

"Only A Flirtation."

BY R. M. C.

He was one of those men who commanded your admiration, your respect, your liking, and the first time Ethel Dorrington met him she only did what everyone did—what more than half the girls did who were introduced to Dr. Walton.

The doctor was undeniably handsome, with a beauty that, while women adored it, men were bound as well to admire. He was manly and chivalrous as a prince. He was gentle and caressing in his manner and tone to women, and yet no one had ever dreamed of calling him impressionable or susceptible.

He was frank, fearless, and decided in his way with men, and still he never had been called self-important or conceited, or in any way offensive.

He was generally conceded to be a gentleman of unusual skill and farsightedness in his profession.

He was positively known to enjoy a widespread reputation, and a large, successful practice.

He was the centre and soul of the social circles in which he moved when his business admitted of such relaxation, which was not nearly as often as people wished.

He was unmarried, well-to-do, kept up a charmingly hospitable establishment, over which his sister presided, and was about thirty-eight years old.

Do you wonder, then, that Ethel Dorrington fell in love with him almost as soon as she met him?

I have said that Dr. Walton was neither impressionable nor susceptible, and by that I mean—not that he did not ardently admire women—pretty, agreeable, fascinating women—but that he was hardly the one to be falling in love with every pretty, agreeable, fascinating woman he saw.

Once or twice in his life he had imagined himself in love, and once had been on the very verge of an engagement, but something had happened that made him take more time for consideration, and the result was when he met Ethel Dorrington he was heart-whole and fancy free.

She was a bewitching, winsome girl, not famous for her beauty, but yet better looking than the majority of girls.

She dressed well and suitably to the occasion always.

She was a fair acquisition to the society in which she took her place as guest and dearest friend of the Merridens; she played well and sung well, and danced exquisitely.

She was intelligent and educated, vivacious, without being vulgarly demonstrative; she knew how to make her lady friends like her and the gentlemen admire her.

And she was betrothed, and had been for a year, to Ernest Halford, a young lawyer in her native city.

And she had looked on Dr. Walton with her beautiful dark eyes, and, before she had been acquainted with him a week, was as much in love with him as though there existed no gentleman named Ernest Halford, whose ring she wore.

She had no idea of being false to Ernest Halford—paradoxical and incredible as the idea seems—even when she deliberately removes her engagement ring from her fore-finger, and arranged her plan of action towards Dr. Walton, determining in her mind that since every other girl petted and courted him in vain, she would adopt an opposite treatment—not in vain.

She did not have the remotest intention of throwing Ernest Halford over, for all she knew she was in love with Dr. Walton, for all she had removed the tell-tale token of possessionship.

She knew in her heart that she was a born flirt, if flirts are born ready made, that her passion for this god-like man, with the face and form of an Apollo, would, in all probability, be transient, and that she would eventually settle down to the sober, sensible life of content and happiness with dear old Ernest.

What harm would there be if she enjoyed a flirtation with Dr Walton, this splendid man of whom her cousins, Nettie and Gracie Merriden, had written until she felt she almost knew him?

Nettie and Gracie had declared that he was a predestinated bachelor, consequently she could do him no harm.

She knew she would eventually marry Ernest, and be a model, demure wife; so, obviously, Dr. Walton would do her no harm.

Then why, in the name of all the Cupids, might not her three months' visit to the Merridens be enlivened and brightened by a genuine flirtation with him?

Whether her conscience chided her in vain or not at all, as Ethel argued with herself and her reasonings, I cannot say.

But I do know that at a social gathering held at Dr. and Miss Walton's elegant home a night or so later she was at her very best, and when the house was quiet and empty of guests again Dr. Walton caught himself thinking, with unusual interest, of the tall, gracefully slender girl in trailing black silk who wore cream and cardinal flowers in her dark hair, and at her round white throat, and who had been so charmingly entertaining, and withal, just enough reserved to show she was above the weakness towards him of her companions in general.

And Dr. Walton made up his mind he would cultivate Miss Dorrington's acquaintance further.

* * * *

Two months of the three that were to constitute Ethel's visit to the Merridens had passed, and Ethel had come to be such intimate friends that people nodded and smiled knowingly when their names were spoken, and hints of jealousy and envy began to be darkly spread whenever Miss Dorrington was seen in Mr. Walton's handsome little carriage; and Dr. Walton himself was hourly coming to the conclusion that of all women he had ever seen or known, this one, with her dark, bright eyes, the charmingly witching ways that had so slowly developed from pleasant indifference to positive yet ladylike interest, was the fairest, sweetest, best; and whom, heaven helping, he would win and wear so proudly.

And Ethel?

This same sunshiny day, when Dr. Walton was driving his round, dispensing words and deeds of cheer, and comfort, and hope, and encouragement, she was sitting in her room, reading a letter the post had just brought her from Ernest, and feeling as she read it, how soon her delightful triumph here must be ended—feeling, with a strange thrill at her heart, that—perhaps—perhaps she had not done wisely; perhaps well, she hoped such a glorious fellow as Dr. Walton would not care when she went away for good.

Would not care! Ah, if she had known how his very soul was stirred at thought of her!

She read Ernest's letter slowly, little blushes surging to her face at intervals.

"If you only knew how I have counted the hours you have been away, my darling, my little love, and how I am counting the minutes until you return. You never shall go away again, Ethel, without me, do you know that? When I think how near our marriage is, only a few weeks from your return, and that you will never go from me again, oh Ethel, darling, I am tempted to throw down my pen, and rush off to you, and take you in my arms and kiss you over and over, in my great happiness.

'They write your family, your father says, that you are having a splendid time, and are the reigning favourite on all sides.

'I want you to have a good time, dear, and let every one know that a precious treasure I possess.

'Only, darling, don't flirt with anyone enough to hurt them, for I know you are as true as steel, loyal and true as you know I am.

'It is just possible that I may come to escort you home, Ethel.

'If the courts are not in session I will.

'Think of it.

'Such a lazy, delicious ride all by ourselves!

'I will be so good and kind to you, darling, that the three hundred miles shall not be tedious!'

* * * *

It would have been impossible for any woman to read Ernest's letter and not realize, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he loved Ethel Dorrington with all tenderness of a grand, noble nature, and that, true and good himself, he pinned his faith implicitly upon her.

And Ethel realized it with a sensation she could not describe, that was not proud delight that it was so, nor yet sorrow that she had been playing false.

'He is a dear, good boy, and I suppose, of course, I love him. But——'

But as she looked up through the window, and caught a glance from Dr. Walton's eyes as he leaned forward and bowed in passing in his carriage, she wondered again if she had not been unwise—ay, worse than unwise—cruel in that she had now two such men to love her.

For days afterwards Ethel was grave and quiet beyond her wont.

For days she delayed the answer to Ernest Halford's letter, and Dr. Walton's quick eyes discerned that, though she persisted in declaring herself the victim to a slow, tedious headache there was something deeper than headache the matter, something beyond the power of medical aid.

It was then that Dr. Walton made up his mind to tell her how he loved her, how he had come to regard all other good the gods had given him as nothing if she, too, might not be given to him; and only the sight of her sad eyes, her pale face, her dispirited ways, prevented him pouring all his confession upon her.

So he decided it would be better not to take advantage of her transient mental or physical indisposition.

The days wore on, and still Ethel could not end the agonizing conflict that was being fought between hourly strengthening passion for Dr. Walton and hourly increasing almost clamoring demands of conscience to be leal and true to her absent, unconscious, trusting lover.

She could not bring herself to answer Ernest's tender letter as it deserved, as she knew he confidently expected, and was her wont to do.

So she scribbled a note, begging his forbearance and telling him she was not well, and would write as soon as it was possible for her to do so.

It was just a merest bit of rest to her mind when she had done that, and the sparkle began to come to her eyes, and Walton saw the returning color on her cheeks, poor, silly child, for such a short respite.

It was many evenings after this, when Dr. Walton had gone to the Merridens, deliberately deciding that he would tell Ethel his hopes, his wishes, and ask her, his own darling one, to promise to crown his life.

He went rather late, knowing she would be alone, for he had sent her a note asking her to remain from the concert rehearsal the Misses Merridens were sure to attend, and the first he knew, as the servant admitted him with rather a white, scared face, was that his services were needed in the parlor, for Miss Ethel had fainted.

He found her lying white and deathly on the lounge, with Mrs. Merriden bathing her temple and wrists with ammonia, and a young gentleman standing anxiously, solicitously by, a whom he had never seen, to whom Mrs. Merriden hurriedly introduced him.

'Doctor Walton, Mr Ernest Halford. Mr. Ernest Halford, Doctor Walton. Oh, doctor, how cold she is! What can be the matter?'

He sat down beside the prostrate girl, as fair as marble as she lay there, her dark lashes sweeping her cheeks, her lips ashen, her form rigid and tense.

When she came out of the long, deathly swoon, his eyes were the first object her own saw, his loving, glad eyes loving, impassioned face.

'My darling! You are better!'

She made a little feeble motion with her hand, which he took, caressing it tenderly between his own as he spoke to her gently.

'What made you faint, my dear child? Were you frightened, or surprised unduly? Do you know of any cause, dear?'

Mrs. Merriden looked fidgety.

'Doctor, I think it must have been the surprise of seeing Mr. Ernest Halford coming in so unexpectedly. He is her engaged husband, you know.'

Dr. Walton suddenly dropped the white, limp hand and stood up, confronting the pallid-faced man, who had heard his betrothed wife called "darling" by this handsome, gentlemanly man.

'Do I understand, sir, Miss Dorrington is engaged to you?'

Earnest saw it all at a glance. He read aright the mute, proud suffering on Dr. Walton's white face, and he knew that if Dr. Walton loved Ethel Dorrington, she loved Dr. Walton.

His voice trembled, despite his grand efforts to speak bravely.

'She is, Dr. Walton. My coming to take her home, the surprise I intended should be as delightful as the meeting was to have been to me, has ended as you see."

It was a tableau worthy of the representation of the ablest painter. The two men face to face with their sad secret.

The girl, pity her, pity her, sister, for she was less wicked than weak, lying like a blighted lily before them. Old Mrs. Merriden the picture of stern astonishment and mortification, and womanly pity.

Ethel suddenly struggled up from the couch, white to the very lips, and reached out her hands to Dr. Walton.

'Don't look so at me! I could't help loving you! I do love you, I do! Oh, Ernest,' and she turned passionately towards him, 'Ernest, won't you forgive me, won't you release me?'

A smile, like a late burst of wintry sunshine at sunset, was on his face.

'Oh, yes. I will forgive you. It is so easy to forgive such a wrong as you have done me. Release you that you may go free to your latest lover? Certainly.'

The quiet, suppressed passion in his tones made Mrs. Merriden shiver; and Ethel sprang at him, taking his hands.

'Ernest, you look as if you could murder me. You are not forgiving me!'

'You have done more than murder me, heaven knows it! But I release you. I will forgive you. Good-bye, all.'

He went out so matter-of-factly that, in view of the circumstances, Mrs. Merriden went after him, almost fearing she knew not what.

But she need not have feared. He meditated no rash act. He went away to the hotel, from thence home, but oh, so differently from what he had anticipated.

When they two were alone, Ethel sank trembling on the sofa, wondering what Dr. Walton would say, this grand glorious lover, who had whispered 'darling, only a moment ago, who had loved her, whom she had doomed one soul to suffering until heaven in its own time should send relief.

The silence became unendurable; and at last, in a passion of love and imploration, Ethel flung her hands away from her eyes and started up to confrout him and plead her own cause—tell him not to censure her, for love of him, and surely he would heed that argument, and take her to his heart, and bid her forget her sin in love.

But she was alone. Dr. Walton had gone, without a word, without a sign!

And she knew it was a token that the measure she had meted out was measured to her.

She never spoke with or saw him, except at a distance, again; and he goes his way, resolved that woman's love is not for him, and has come out of the fire refined and purified, and is the more thoughtful, tender, patient than before—if that could be.

He is not unhappy, nor lonesome, and only occasional memories of Ethel's sweet face haunt him.

Ernest Halford was never married. He could not stand the discipline of disappointment as Dr. Walton, with his finer nature, did.

He is a morose man, who hates womankind and avoids them.

He has grown shiftless and cynical, and will be, eventually, the wreck of a man.

While Ethel Dorrington, who could not resist the opportunity to flirt a little, is old, faded, and living out her days with the bitter knowledge of the havoc she wrought for time, and perhaps for eternity.

Girls, heed the lesson.

It may be sport while it lasts, but no mortal eye or human hand can measure the infinity of result of 'Only a Flirtation."

In the Jury-Room.

The case seemed clear enough to a boy 10 years old.

The plaintiff sued the defendant on a debt. The defendant admitted that he contracted the debt, and that he had never paid it. He tried to show, as an offset, that he once lent plaintiff some money, but he failed to even establish the date of the transaction. The amount sued for was $400, and the judge charged us to return a verdict in favor of the plaintiff.

When we got settled in the jury-room and elected a foreman, he said:

"Well, I suppose we must return a verdict for the full amount?"

"Well, I don't!" replied one of the jurors—a man whom I had selected as an honest, conscientious juror.

"But isn't it a plain case?"

"No, sir! The plaintiff had two lawyers, while the defendant had but one. There was nothing fair about that!"

"But the judge charged us to return a verdict for the amount," observed another juror.

"'Sposing he did!" exclaimed an old man on his left; "if the judge knows more about this case than we do, then what are we here for?"

"Which of 'em was the plaintiff, anyhow?" solemnly inquired a solemn juror whom I had seen sleeping through most of the trial.

"The red-headed man, of course," replied a young man who wore very tight pantaloons and, chewed plug tobacco with great ambition.

"Was it! Why, I thought it was the fat man!" exclaimed juror No. 6.

The foreman suggested that we mark on slips of paper the amount each juror thought the plaintiff entitled to. His suggestion was followed, and the amounts ran from 15 cents to $400.

"It seems to me," he reflected, "that the defendant either owes him $400 or nothing."

"I don't believe he owes him nuthin'," replied one of the twelve.

"But you heard the evidence?"

"Hang the evidence!"

Some one suggested that we add up the sums marked and strike an average.

Another suggested that we return a verdict for the defendant.

A third offered to flip a cent and head or tail for the $400 or nothing.

A fourth wanted some one to tell him if the debt hadn't been outlawed.

It was finally discovered that we stood five for the plaintiff and seven for the defendant and the foreman wanted to know what we should do.

"Well," said one of the seven, "if we agree with you in this case, will you agree with us in the next?"

He couldn't promise, and the leader of the dissenters declared that he would remain in that room a lifetime before he would agree with the five.

And at the end of an hour there were eight men willing to return a verdict for $75.

At the end of two hours there were seven men who didn't care a cent and five who were in favor of the defendant.

At the end of three hours six men were in favor of $400 and the other six were playing poker.

In another hour two of us favored $400 and the other ten had made up their minds that at least two out of the three lawyers ought to be in jail. We finally marched in with the announcement that we couldn't agree, when the juror who didn't know plaintiff from defendant raised his voice and protested:

"Judge, we could have agreed all right if anybody had told us what the case was about! I think we orter be furnished with diagrams!"—*M. Quad in Detroit Free Press.*

A Wild Spot in Georgia.

On the brink of Tallulah, near an ancient baptist church, which, by its founders, many years past, was named Tiger, and which was burned last year by an incendiary in the wild woods, we found a cape jassamine bush containing cape jassamine blooms. Near here is the "stand," behind a huge chestnut log lying on the bank of the Tallulah river, that the distillers used to take and from behind which they shot the revenue men as they would pass along a level sand running round parallel with the river. An official of the revenue service named Crawford was once shot here. A mountaineer named Oliver McCrackin and the son-in-law of Mrs. Smith, owner of the Sinking mountain, were sentenced to and served a term in the federal prison as a penalty for doing it.—*Washington (Ga.) Chronicle.*

HOW HE DID IT.

A mean Yankee is as mean a fellow as can be found anywhere, and such a one as is described in the following incident, we are sorry to say, may occasionally be found:

A story of close management is told about a Yankee who lately settled in the West. He was the picture of a mean man, but, as he put himself to work in good earnest to get his house to rights, the neighbors helped him. After he had everything fixed to his satisfaction he thought that he must have some chickens. He was too honest to steal and too mean to buy them. At last a thought struck him—he could borrow. He went to a neighbor and thus accosted him:

"Wal, I reckon you haint got no old hen nor nothin' you'd lend me for a few weeks, have you, neighbor?"

"I will lend you one with pleasure," replied the gentleman, picking out the very finest in the coop.

The Yankee took the hen home, and then went to another neighbor and borrowed a dozen eggs. He then set the hen, and in due course of time she hatched out a dozen chickens.

The Yankee was again puzzled; he could return the hen, but how was he to return the eggs? Another idea—and who ever saw a live Yankee without one?—he would keep the hen until she had laid a dozen eggs.

This he did, and then returned the hen and eggs to their respective owners—remarking as he did so,—

"Wal, I reckon I've got as fine a dozen of chickens as you ever laid your eyes on, and they didn't cost me a cent, nuther."